

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2243
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GUATEMALA 4802

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: GT, PINT

SUBJ: LAUGERUD'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

SUMMARY: IN HIS ANNUAL STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS PRESIDENT LAUGERUD TOLD THE GUATEMALAN PEOPLE THEY SHOULD BE PATIENT AND NOT EXPECT "INSTANTANEOUS" RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY. LAUGERUD THAN LASHED OUT AT THE ENEMIES OF RECONSTRUCTION. HE CLAIMED HIS ADMINISTRATION HAS STAYED WITHIN THE LAW IN TRYING TO CURTAIL VIOLENCE, BUT INTIMATED THAT HE MAY BE PREPARED TO TAKE HARSHER MEASURES. LAUGERUD ALSO DEFENDED HIS TWO-PRONGED "LAND REFORM" POLICY OF DISTRIBUTING LAND TO THE LANDLESS AND SUPPORTING THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD DELIVERED HIS ANNUAL STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS TO CONGRESS JULY 1. HIS TALK WAS ENTIRELY DEVOTED TO DOMESTIC ISSUES, AND BELIZE WAS NOT MENTIONED.

2. RECONSTRUCTION. LAUGERUD REITERATED THE FREQUENTLY STATED THEME THAT PEOPLE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT GOVERN-

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MENT IS NOT A "BIG FATHER" THAT DISTRIBUTES MONEY AND

GOODS TO ITS CHILDREN, BUT RATHER THE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS WILL REQUIRE A CONTINUING NATIONAL EFFORT. GUATEMALAN SHOULD BE PATIENT AND NOT EXPECT THAT GOVERNMENT CAN SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS OF HOUSING, SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, AND ROAD CONDITIONS "INSTANTANEOUSLY", PARTICULARLY SINCE THERE WERE ALREADY SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN THESE AREAS BEFORE THE FEBRUARY 4 EARTHQUAKE.

3. LAUGERUD LASHED OUT AT THE "ENEMIES" OF RECONSTRUCTION INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF LOW COST BANK LOAN TO BECOME LENDERS THEMSELVES; TRADE UNION LEADERS WHO "CREATE STRIKES TO WEAKEN THE PRODUCTIVE PROCESS OF THE COUNTRY, AND TO CREATE ANARCHY AND VILENCE" (THIS RECEIVED LOUD APPLAUSE); POLITICIANS THAT INITIATE AND SUPPORT SUBERSION AND AGGRESSION AGAINST SOCIAL PEACE; AND EMPLOYERS WHO CREATE FRUSTRATION AND RESENTMENT AMONG THE WORKERS AND CAMPESIONS.

4. DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, VILENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS- LAUGERUD SAID THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN OPEN TO DIALOGUE WITH ALL, EVEN THE OPPOSITION AND THAT HIS "GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLIED WITH THE PRACTICE, THE THEORY, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT." BUT THIS ATTITUDE HAS FACILITATED ABUSES OF DEMOCRACY BY POLITICAL DELINQUENTS. YET, IF THE GOVERNMENT USES COERCIVE MEANS TO PREVENT CRIME IT IS ACCUSED OF "POLICE BRUTALITY" AND "REPRESSION". "AS A GOVERNMENT THAT ACTS WITHIN THE LAW AND NOT ABOVE IT, ITS ACTION IS REGULATED BY THE LAW, A FACT THAT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHO CRITICIZE THE LENIENCY OF THE AUTHORITIES AND CLAMOR FOR A STRONGER HAND, AS WELL AS BY THOSE WHO BRAND THE GOVERNMENT AS REPRESSIVE AND DICTATORIAL AND AS NOT RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS."

5. "IN REFERENCE TO POLITICAL DELINQUENCY MY GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFICIENT MORAL AUTHORITY TO ASK WHY THE VIOLENCE STILL CONTINUES WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO ELIMINATE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CAUSES WHICH COULD JUSTIFY IT."

6. "BUT IF THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE IS BASED ONLY ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PROMOTION OF IDEOLOGIES WHICH TRY TO SUBSTITUTE TOTALITARIAN INSTITUTIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, MY GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFICIENT VIGOR AND POPULAR SUPPORT TO REPRESS AND DESTROY IT," (LOUD APPLAUSE).

7. LAND POLICIES-LAUGERUD DEFENDED HIS TWO-PRONGED POLICY OF DISTRIBUTING LAND TO THE LANDLESS AND SUPPORTING THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT. HE DENIED THAT THERE IS

ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE COOPERATIVES COULD BE POLITICALLY
EXPLOITED BY THE EXTREME LEFT.

8. COMMENT: LAUGERUD SEEMS IN PART TO BE LAYING THE
BASIS FOR A STRONGER POLICY AGAINST POLITICAL VIOLENCE
AND IN PART RESPONDING TO CRITICISM FROM THE RIGHT THAT
HE HAS NOT DEALT SEVERELY ENOUGH WITH POLITICAL
VIOLENCE FROM THE LEFT. HIS GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED, HE
SAYS, TO COMBAT THE VIOLENCE WHILE STAYING WITHIN THE
CONSTRAINTS OF THE LAW, BUT THAT THIS HAS FACILITATED
ABUSES OF THE SYSTEM AND BROUGHT UPON THE GOVERNMENT
CRITICISM BOTH FROM THOSE WHO SAY IT IS TOO LENIENT AND
FROM THOSE WHO SAY IT IS TOO HARSH. SINCE HE CLAIMS
HIS ADMINISTRATION IS ELIMINATING THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL CAUSES OF VIOLENCE THIS LEAVES ONLY THOSE WHO
ARE USING IDEOLOGY TO SUBVERT THE GOVERN-
MENT, I.E., THE EXTREME LEFT, AND LAUGERUD SAYS HE
IS PREPARED TO CRACK DOWN HARD ON THEM.

9. LAUGERUD DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE SPACE IN HIS SPEECH,
AS HE DID LAST YEAR, TO A DEFENSE OF HIS LAND REFORM
POLICIES, AN INDICATION THAT HE IS STILL RECEIVING
CRITICISM FROM GUATEMALA'S MORE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS,
PARTICULARLY THE MLN.

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